

2022

SAMHSA SOAR MAY E-NEWS

Applicant Self-Help Guide: Completing an SSI/SSDI Application

While the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center works to ensure all people have access to SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR), we know that the need remains greater than the capacity to serve in many states. To help bridge the gap for people who are interested in applying for Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI) but do not have access to a SOAR provider, we created a tool to walk claimants through the SSI/SSDI application process. Our brand-new *Self-Help Guide for Applicants* provides step-by-step instructions, from creating a my Social Security account to following up with Disability Determination Services after an application is submitted. Look at the last page for a customizable chart of service organizations. We hope this resource serves as an important tool in helping your communities!

SOARWORKS
April 2022



[Access the Guide](#)

May Is Mental Health Awareness Month:

Resources for American Indian and Alaska Native Communities



May Is Mental Health Awareness Month: Resources for American Indian and Alaska Native Communities

In observance of Mental Health Awareness Month, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center continues its effort to bring resources to American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) individuals, families, and communities. AI/AN people experience severe health disparities, including a high prevalence of and risk factors for mental health, suicide, and substance use. They are also disproportionately represented among groups with greater need for support and services, including people experiencing homelessness.

AI/AN individuals and communities confront multiple factors that contribute to and impact overall behavioral health and wellness. These include historical and intergenerational trauma, poverty, under-employment, lack of access to health care, lower educational attainment, housing problems, and violence. Health inequities have only been amplified as tribal communities face the COVID-19 pandemic with limited access to behavioral health services, but SOAR and other federal programs offer help to support and empower AI/AN individuals in their recovery and housing processes.

[SAMHSA's Tribal Affairs'](#) mission is to provide efficient and effective delivery of resources and services to ensure that AI/AN individuals have access to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services that reflect the best of modern science and traditional cultural practices. The SOAR model advances this mission, using a culturally sensitive and holistic engagement process to help AI/AN people with a serious mental illness, medical impairment, or co-occurring substance use disorder who are experiencing or at risk for homelessness gain access to critical SSI/SSDI benefits. When combined with other supportive services, such as affordable or supported housing, more robust healthcare and treatment options, and additional employment opportunities, SOAR can help AI/AN individuals achieve long-term stability in their communities.

For an in-depth examination of the complex factors contributing to the behavioral health disparities AI/AN communities face and stories of success and a path forward to access and healing, access the [National Tribal Behavioral Health Agenda](#) [PDF]. In addition, the following SAMHSA resources offer information on accessing behavioral healthcare in your area:

- [SAMHSA's National Helpline](#) (1-800-662-HELP [4357] or TTY: 1-800-487-4889)
- [Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator](#)

Mental Health Awareness Month: Alert Systems

Mental Health Awareness Month raises awareness about the experiences of millions of Americans that live with a mental illness and resources to help support them. We encourage

SOAR providers to participate in this national movement to elevate dialogue around mental health and collaborate to provide community support, education, and advocacy for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.

For SOAR providers, it is not uncommon to lose contact with the people we serve. Losing track of a client is part of the challenge of the work—sometimes people simply don't come back. But what if it's more than that? People with serious mental illness can go missing for a variety of reasons. Mental or cognitive impairment, developmental disability, or physical disability can bring about symptoms that can cause a person to become disoriented, confused, or lost. According to the [National Crime Information Center report](#) [PDF], close to 30,000 people with disabilities were reported missing in 2020 alone.

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center would like to raise awareness and acknowledgment of missing persons with disabilities. Here are some resources that may be helpful to providers and family members when a client or loved one with a mental illness is missing:

- [Persons with Mental Illness Who Are Homeless or Missing: A Guide for Families](#) [PDF]
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness: Finding a Missing Loved One](#)

This [table](#) provides a general overview of the alert systems implemented in the 11 states identified by the Congressional Research Service as having state alert systems authorized either by law or executive order, with most states passing a law to create the alert system for missing adults. In addition, the [National Missing and Unidentified Persons Systems](#) provides information and resources about missing person cases in the United States.

See How SOAR Works



Application Tip! Submitting the Online Disability Benefit Application

Once you have submitted the online versions of the [SSA-16](#) [PDF] and [SSA-3368](#) [PDF] through the [online disability benefit application](#), you will want to submit the remaining parts of the application directly to your local Social Security Administration (SSA) field office. We recommend reaching out to your SSA contact (or your [Local or State Team Lead](#)) to determine the best way to drop off the completed application packet (fax, mail, drop box, etc.). The remainder of the completed application packet will include

the [SSA-827](#) [PDF], [1696](#) [PDF], and [8000](#) [PDF]. The Medical Summary Report and any key medical records will be sent directly to your state's Disability Determination Services via the bar-coded cover sheet or [Electronic Records Express](#). We also recommend using the [SOAR Checklist for Initial Claims](#) [PDF] as a cover sheet!

SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call

May 10, 2022, 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET

Add SOARing Over Lunch to Your Calendar

Federal Updates

[Social Security Administration Releases Equity Action Plan](#)

The Social Security Administration has released its first Equity Action Plan, supporting President Biden's whole-of-government equity agenda to advance equity, civil rights, racial justice, and equal opportunity for all.

On January 20, 2021, The President signed an Executive Order, "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government." The Executive Order requires all Federal agencies "to pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and other people who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality."

[Social Security Administration Has Resumed In-Person Services at Local Social Security Offices](#)

As of April 7, 2022, local Social Security offices have restored in-person services, including for people without an appointment.

SOAR Jobs

- **Texas:** IntegralCare is seeking a full-time SOAR Specialist based in Austin, Texas.

Learn more about this position on the [SOARWorks website](#). Do you have a job posting you would like to share with the SOAR community? Please submit it to the [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center](#)!



More from SOAR



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is sponsored by SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Disclaimer: The SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center is sending this eNews with support from SAMHSA, HHS. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of HHS or SAMHSA.

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